

"ETERNAL RETURN" AS A FACTOR IN THE FORMATION OF A NEW REALITY

Abstract

The article considers the global processes taking place in the modern world from the perspective of traditional worldview. It is stated that an objective perception of the new reality and an appropriate response to the contemporary crises require to reassess the initial principles and attitudes of the modernity. The rational and secularized ideology of Enlightenment, based on a constructive and projective attitude towards society and human, eventually threat to dehumanize the society and desocialize human. There appeared a need, firstly, to expand the historical perspective of modern world problems and, secondly, to recognize that the society denying the traditional principles and forms of social communication will come to a dead end. The author proves, that the future will reveal a general historical pattern: those civilizations and cultures, that in the process of technology development, maintained orientation to traditional values and institutions survived. These issues are considered in the context of "eternal return" concept, which is actively discussed in modern philosophy.

Keywords: new reality, traditionalism, philosophy of history, modernity, eternal return.

Author

Rafail Valezyanovich Nasyrov

Senior Lecturer of the Department of Theory and History of
Altai State University, PhD in Legal Sciences
(Barnaul, Russia)



A tower is the creation of another century.
Without past it is nothing. Indeed, a new
tower would be ridiculous.

Gaston Bachelard

The article title points to the philosophy of history, that is rationale of the present through the outlook on the whole world history. Currently, this approach is not accepted and the contemporary intellectuals respond to it with a proud smile. It should be noted that lawyers have the concept of capacity, which means the ability of the subject to clearly perceive the world around, which implies the presence of both short and long-term memory in consciousness. If a person remembers and evaluates the events of the present only through the prism of what he observes at the moment or in a short time frame, then it is appropriate to raise the question of the

insanity of this subject. In this regard, it is worth noting that decades in history are moments. Deng Xiaoping in the year of the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Great French Revolution of 1789 refused to answer the question about the consequences of this event, pointing out: "It's too early to judge."

For an intellectual who knows no other worldview system than Western European rationalism and pragmatism, and thinks only within the framework of Modern times and Modern history, modernity causes surprise and even wariness — it is obvious that China and India are becoming the centers of the global world. Although this process in the context of the entire

world history should be perceived not as an innovation, but as the *return* of history “to its own circles”. We are talking about the changes at the external, geopolitical world map as well as about the ideological side of the new reality. The more than three thousand-year history of Chinese and Indian civilizations with their amazing achievements in the field of science and technology in the past shows the fundamental possibility of combining modernization with the preservation of traditional institutions and principles of social existence. What makes Western European civilization so unique is that several centuries ago it followed an extremely peculiar (in the context of world history) path of almost total economization, rationalization, legitimization and, accordingly (in one form or another), the public life statism. The reward for this “Faustian bargain” was the acquisition of global geopolitical dominance. But, as you know, everything comes at a price; the intrigue of the present comes down to summing up this kind of experiment that world history has allowed.

Indeed, a traditionalist is able to recognize that unique events and processes that have never been seen in the past arise in history. But he believes that they rather relate to the external side of social and individual life. Hence the problems of a person’s social and inner being, including those related to the correlation of good and evil, freedom and responsibility, selfishness and altruism, etc., remain essentially unchanged. The way of civilization leads to the fact that the new conditions of human existence do not allow us to copy the forms and methods of solving these problems from our ancestors, but the scale of assessment of human life and the state of the whole society does not change. G. Bachelard expresses this fundamentally retrospective perspective of the traditional worldview as follows: “A tower is the creation of another century. Without past it is nothing. Indeed, a new tower would be ridiculous. [3. — p. 68].

The concept of “eternal return” introduced by F. Nietzsche into the discourse of Western philosophy must be understood as a manifestation of a universal regularity, that the foundations of the traditional worldview cannot be destroyed. The tradition persists not only in the developed systems of religious and philosophical worldview, but also in the daily life of the modern human, who regularly experiences a state, according to V. Frankl, “existential vacuum”: “The main manifestations of existential frustration — boredom and apathy — have become a challenge to education, as well as psychiatry” [11. — p. 309].

The Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes contains the oft-quoted words: “What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.” (Ecclesiastes 1:9). It would seem that the author of these lines (probably King Solomon) calls not to seek the meaning of life, but only to feel its pleasures as much as possible: “Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do.” (Ecclesiastes 9:7). To understand why this book with clearly hedonistic appeals was included in the Bible, it is necessary to read it through the eyes of not only a theologian and philosopher, but also a connoisseur of the artistic word. S. Averintsev points out that the author of Ecclesiastes uses a literary and artistic technique of meaningful “teasing” the reader. The main message of this biblical book is “the futility of trying to comprehensively embrace life, subjugate it in practice or exhaust it with thought” [1]. The text addresses to those who are already fed up with the benefits of earthly life, and they recognise in the advice to continue to be fed up with them a note of a grin, a desire to “pour salt on the wound.” In Ecclesiastes, we are talking about an obvious religious truth that cannot be rationally justified or refuted — “man does not live by bread alone”, and

there is a hidden call to care both about earthy benefits and soul order.

The fact is that numerous prejudices of the past have been replaced by one fundamental prejudice of progress, which is based on the conviction that the emerging new conditions and means of social existence supposedly means a fundamentally new type of person and society emerge as well. Thus, E. and H. Tofflers confidently state that after the agrarian and industrial revolutions, "the coming civilization is preparing a new code of behaviour for us" [10. — p. 254]. Such unambiguous predictions correspond to the rational-mechanistic methodology of the enlighteners of the 18 century. and they are made intellectually knee-jerk, when the results of the modernity implemented are not noticed. Representatives of this philosophical and socio-political tradition would not see in modern society the embodiment of high ideals of Truth, Goodness and Beauty, and the man of consumer society turned out to be only a parody of their ideas about a reasonable and harmoniously developed person. J. Sol highlights the collapse of the modernity in the most outrageously harsh title of his famous book [9. — p. 355–356.]. We are talking not only about the content of the modernity, but above all about its flat methodological approach, when creating new attributes of a human external being is perceived as a change in his essence.

M. Heidegger remarked about F. Nietzsche: "Perhaps he is not at all such a rebel as he himself wanted to seem?"; about the concept of "eternal return" — "Without this teaching as a basis, his philosophy becomes a tree without roots alike" [12. — p. 10; 223]. F. Nietzsche did not create these roots, but sought to return to them and rely on them: "The doctrine of the eternal return contains a statement about existence in its entirety, and thus it connects with the teachings that have long been known to Western track of thought" [12. — p. 223]. Let us add that we are talking about a universal,

archetypal intention inherent in all forms of worldview, from primitive myths to developed religious and philosophical systems. F. Nietzsche is a "product of the times", of the 19 century, accompanied with mindbending scientific and technical achievements; it is a well known fact, that the philosopher closely followed the discoveries in the field of natural science, and, for example, the teachings of Ch. Darwin arrested much interest. But F. Nietzsche has inherent dually split consciousness, since he was at the same time a mystical philosopher and could not become a flat rationalist and a scientist like Evgeny Bazarov depicted in the novel "Fathers and Children", who claimed: "Study the anatomy of the eye properly: how can there be, as you say, a mysterious look? It's all romanticism, nonsense, rot, petty art."

In August 1881 at the Swiss village of Sils-Maria, F. Nietzsche experienced a mystical insight [7. — p. 386], which always goes together with an awareness of the being as obviously cohesive and eternal. But why did these sublime experiences in the philosopher, along with inspiration, also cause a feeling of horror? Firstly, contact with the divine is always ambivalent; the words "wondrous" and "wild" have the same root. The French linguist E. Benveniste established that the Common-Indoeuropean concept of dikaios was dual: positive — "sanctified by the presence of the deity" — and negative — "that contact with which is forbidden for a human" [4. — p. 343]. Secondly, this mystical insight, which Nietzsche called "eternal return", the philosopher experienced in the era of the "Faustian bargain", i.e. in the context of the already dominant and very effective "worldly life" principle of Western European rationalism and pragmatism. The connection with the sacred is indissoluble, but not immediate; it is necessary to build a system of constant and at the same time tactfully mediated communication with it. If society and man, as in the last three centuries, lose their vigilance, get

distracted from this side of their being, or even turn their backs on the sacred, then it does not disappear, but manifests itself in a terrifying, wild aspect.

F. Nietzsche realized that Westerners had forgotten these truths ("God is dead!"), and all of his work can be interpreted as a belief that a return to tradition cannot be evolutionary and painless, but will be tragic and painful: "There comes a time when we will have to pay for what we have been for we have been Christians for two thousand years: we have lost the heaviness that allowed us to live — we no longer know where we are coming from or where we are going" [8. — p. 41–42]. Such statements should be taken not as a general assessment of Christianity, but always bearing in mind the philosopher's own recognition: "What I am telling you is the history of the next two centuries" [8. — p. 21].

The era of Western European philistinism has come, about which A.I. Herzen writes: "Together with his domination, the entire moral life will low, and St. Mill, for example, did not exaggerate at all, speaking about the narrowing of the mind, energy, the erasure of personalities, the constant shallowness of life, the constant exclusion of universal interests from it, about reducing it to the interests of a trading office and petty-bourgeois welfare" [5. — p. 148]. This process also manifested itself in the system and atmosphere of, in the words of F. Nietzsche, "petty politics". As you know, Western European philosophy as a whole has a pronounced political nature. Thus, Plato observed the process of decomposition of the polis and was struck by the discrepancy between the ideals of the civil community of the late 5–4 centuries and the ideals of the polis; demagogues were only a parody of the "statesmen" of the era of the Greco-Perian wars. Born and brought up in the family of a sincerely believing father (pastor), the young Nietzsche was, like Plato, struck by the profanation and falsification of the image of not only a priest, but also a bear-

er of state power (a knight-aristocrat). It is worth noting that F. Nietzsche considered the flourishing nationalist movements and nationalism, including German, to be one of the manifestations of "petty politics": "The Germans have no idea how rude they are, but this is an excellent degree of rudeness — they are not even ashamed to be only Germans <...> In vain I am looking for at least one sign of tact, delicacy in relation to me. The Jews gave them to me, the Germans never" [7. — p. 406]. It is noteworthy that the young philosopher enthusiastically embraced the activities of such a politician as Fr. von Bismarck, but then became disillusioned with him.

This tendency of shredding politics, noticed by F. Nietzsche, has now taken the form of an obvious crisis of modern political elites. Moreover, researchers state the degradation of elites, when personal well-being begins to dominate the sense of social responsibility, personal goals replace public ones. In this regard, F. Appel rightly remarks: "At first glance, it may seem that Nietzsche's occasional phrases about a healthy form of "self-love" mean that his noble types have an obligation only to themselves and their own self-improvement. However, an obligation to oneself and obligations to others do not necessarily exclude each other. Rather, his preferred table of values and ranks concerns "how far his responsibility could extend." Nietzschean noble types instinctively strive for the burden of responsibility, and they consider this a sign of nobility" [2. — p. 223]. F. Zakaria writes about the loss of ideals in the sphere of modern politics: "We freed the upper classes from any sense of responsibility, and they gladly met us halfway... When the leaders of society lived in accordance with their ideals, they were honored. If they did not meet the ideals, society expressed deep disappointment. Today, on the contrary, we expect very little from those in power — that's why they rarely disappoint us" [6. — p. 263].

The global problem of the crisis of political elites was sharply manifested in

Russia before and after the collapse of the USSR. But even at the present time, the question of the existence of a proper state (sovereign) political elite combining high professional and moral qualities, which is a condition for self-preservation and positive development of the country, remains acute. The solution to this problem cannot be realized evolutionarily in the course of the gradual recovery of the ruling stratum; the events of late 2021 — early 2022 showed that the renewal of the elite takes place in extreme conditions of solving the question "To be or not to be".

There is an acute question about which civilizations, cultures and states will survive in the process of the formation of a new reality. On this issue, as a rule, judgments are made about the need to keep up with modern technological progress. Indeed, it is important to pay tribute to the level of technology development, but at the same time not to fall into a technocratic illusion. History shows that, in the end, those societies that ensured the development of technologies (spheres of civilization) survive, but such progress did not lead to the destruction of traditional values and institutions.

In conclusion, we point out that the state of the "collapse of the modernity" and the crisis of Western civilization affects the change in the concept of "Asia", its content and connotations. Stereotypes about backwardness, stagnation and inability to develop Asian societies are gradually disappearing. The bearer of the traditional worldview perceives this process not as the emergence of a fundamentally new political map of the world, but as a return to world politics of China and India after a relatively short (given their more

than three thousand-year history) colonial period. In the context of the colonial and postcolonial periods, i.e. the last three centuries, it is necessary to consider the history of Russia, which stubbornly sought to defend political independence. In order to preserve sovereignty, it was necessary to make "leaps" in technological development, which predetermined events not only in the external, but also in the internal history of the country (the reforms of Peter I, Stalin's industrialization).

The idea of the universality of Western values is still preserved in public, including global discourse, which is the ideological basis of the "clash of civilizations". But now it is becoming clear that the West, as a result of persistent propaganda of the thesis about the its universally-applied way of life, "runs into rudeness" and "digs a hole for itself". One can only imagine with horror that China (with its population and potential) will really try to replace the United States as a superpower. The difficulty is that in the conditions of the crisis of the West, the importance of its development guidelines in the economy, politics, law, even the patterns of everyday life remains. The discourse on world problems continues to be carried out in the context of a pragmatically secularized worldview. Civilizations and states face the problem of achieving not only economic and political, but also ideological and ideological self-sufficiency. The whole intrigue of the mankind development in the coming decades boils down to the question: "Can an algorithm of development be worked out, according to which modernization is combined not with the abolition, but with the preservation of traditional values and institutions?"

References

1. *Аверинцев С.С.* София-Логос. Словарь. Экклезиаст. — URL: predanie.ru/averincev-sergey...sofiya-logos-slovar/. [Averintsev S.S. Sophia-Logos. Dictionary. Ecclesiastes. — URL: predanie.ru/averincev-sergey...sofiya-logos-slovar/.]
2. *Аппель Ф.* Ницше против демократии. — СПб.: Наука, 2016. [Appel, Fredrick Nietzsche contra devocracy — SPb: Nauka, 2016].
3. *Башляр Г.* Поэтика пространства. — М.: Ад Маргинем Пресс, 2014. [Bachelard G. The Poetics of Space — Moscow: Ad Marginem Press, 2014.]

4. *Бенвенист Э.* Словарь индоевропейских социальных терминов. — М.: Прогресс-Универс, 1995. [Émile Benveniste Dictionary of Indo-European Concepts and Society — Moscow: Progress-University, 1995.]
5. *Герцен А.И.* Собрание сочинений в 30 тт. Т. 16. — М.: АН СССР, 1959. [Herzen A.I. Collected Works in 30 vol. Volume 16 — Moscow: USSR Academy of Sciences, 1959.]
6. *Закария Ф.* Будущее свободы: неолиберальная демократия в США и за их пределами. — М.: Ладомир, 2004. [F. Zakaria. The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad — W.W. Norton & Company, 2004]
7. *Ницше Ф.* ЕССЕ НОМО // Избранные произведения. Кн. 2. — М.: Сирин, 1990. [Nietzsche F. ЕССЕ НОМО // Selected Works. Series 2. — М.: Sirin, 1990.]
8. *Ницше Ф.* Воля к власти. — СПб.: Азбука-классика, 2006. [Nietzsche F. Will to Power. — SPb: Azbuka-classika, 2006.]
9. *Сол Дж. Р.* Ублюдки Вольтера. Диктатура разума на Западе. — М.: АСТ: Астрель, 2007. [John Ralston Saul. Voltaire's Bastards, The Doubter's Companion and The Unconscious Civilization — Moscow: AST: Astril, 2007.]
10. *Франкл В.* Человек в поисках смысла: сборник. — М.: Прогресс, 1990. [Frankl V. Man in Search of Meaning: A Collection. — Moscow: Progress, 1990.]
11. *Хайдеггер М.* Ницше. — Т. 1. — СПб.: Владимир Даль, 2006. [Heidegger M. Nietzsche. — Т. 1. — SPb.: Vladimir Dal, 2006.]
12. *Тоффлер Э. и Х.* Создание новой цивилизации // Апокалипсис смысла. Сборник работ западных философов. — М.: Алгоритм, 2007. [Alvin and Haidi Toffler. Creating a New Civilization, Turner Pub, 1995]

Author of the translation of the article from Russian into English:

Kirill Vasilev

MCU, Institute of Foreign Languages

